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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

REV. G. H. ATKINSON, D. D.,

BEFORE THE

Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York,

UPON THE

POSSESSION, SETTLEMENT, CLIMATE AND RE-
SOURCES OF OREGON AND THE NORTH-
WEST COAST, INCLUDING SOME
REMARKS UPON ALASKA.

DECEMBER 3d, 1868.

New-York:

JOHN W. AMERMAN, PRINTER,
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Rev. Dr. ATKINSON,

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UPON THE RESOURCES OF THE NORTHWEST COAST.

REMARKS BY MR. WILLIAM E. DODGE, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER.

THE President said: Members of the Chamber are aware of the presence in our city of Dr. ATKINSON, long a resident of Oregon, and knowing that he had been requested to deliver an address in regard to its early history and the present prospects of the Northwest Coast, together with some remarks with respect to Alaska, before the Boards of Trade in Boston and other cities, he has been requested to address the Chamber of Commerce to-day upon these subjects. A knowledge of any thing connected with the history and resources of our Northwest Coast and in relation to Alaska will be interesting to the merchants of New-York. Dr. ATKINSON has kindly assented, and is present, and with your permission will now proceed to address the Chamber.

ADDRESS BY DR. ATKINSON.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE :

I have to acknowledge the courtesy of your invitation to address you at this business hour upon the possession, settlement and re-

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sources of our Northwest Coast, including some remarks upon Alaska. There is a reason why remarks upon the possession should precede those upon the resources of the country.

We had a right to Oregon, which was our only possession on the Pacific Coast for many years, first by discovery of the Columbia River. According to the laws of nations, as commonly understood, discovery gives the right of possession; and the discovery of a river gives the right of possession to all the territory drained by the river; which I believe was the main point made by Mr. WEBSTER in the final treaty concerning the Northwest boundary. But had that failed, we had the right of possession by purchase of all the territory west of the Mississippi, claimed as Louisiana, by France, and purchased by Mr. JEFFERSON, in 1804. Had that failed, we had the right of possession by purchase from Spain, in 1819, of all their possessions, gained by discovery or in any other way, north of 42° north latitude. So that we had a three-fold right, as stated, if I remember correctly, by Mr. WEBSTER, in the settlement of the boundary, any one of which was strong enough, for the region north of 42° and south of 49° . The claim, indeed, was extended to $54^{\circ} 40'$, but it was not maintained.

But possession by right is very different from possession in fact. Gentlemen here present and other intelligent merchants and gentlemen of our country, are aware that that region of country was for a long time a *terra incognita* to most of the business world, and that the fur trading companies were among the first to establish permanent possession upon that coast. The Northwest Company, having its head in Montreal; the Hudson's Bay Company, having its head in London, were two of the older companies that extended their forts and trading posts across the continent to the Columbia River. There were other companies: the Southwest Company, with which Mr. ASTOR had very much to do, and the Pacific Company. Mr. ASTOR established his post at the mouth of the Columbia earliest, and at some other posts along the river, and he had a great deal of trading there, in the interest of the nation as well as for his own interest, thus co-operating with the United States in possessing that region, which we had obtained by the right of discovery.

The Hudson's Bay Company at length crowded out not only the Northwest Company's posts, but Mr. ASTOR's also, and changed the name of Astoria to Fort George, thus gaining a practical possession, having their forts all along the river. They laid a claim, on behalf of England, of course, to Oregon, which was maintained until the final claim was settled.

The next power that comes in is the Indian missionary power. Many years ago, about 1833 or 1834, some Indians crossed the continent asking for the white man's God. Some missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church and of the American Board went out across the continent to teach them, beyond the Rocky Mountains, and beyond the Cascade Mountains. Dr. WHITMAN was one of these men. He went from your own State. He was an intelligent and patriotic citizen, as well as a faithful missionary. His services were needed as a physician, in various places, as well as a missionary. He saw the resources of the country. The existence of gold there was known to him and to the *savans* of the Hudson's Bay Company before 1840; not as to the amount, but the fact that it was a gold-bearing country; for that company of traders had very intelligent men at their head, and they employed intelligent men to go with them, and under their protection, botanists, mineralogists, &c.; and thus they had learned before 1840 that Oregon was a gold-bearing country, especially that part of the country lately taken off to form Idaho.

Dr. WHITMAN, knowing these facts, saw that there was not only a strong motive but a plan to secure actual possession by settlers. Statements were made and repeated that Americans never could cross the Rocky Mountains in wagons and go down to the Columbia River; while efforts were made to settle the country from the Red River. Perhaps some of you will remember that one or two of the British Reviews declared that Americans never could reach the Columbia in wagons; that they must reach the country by way of Cape Horn, if at all; but the English could settle it from the Red River. That was the plan in 1841, about the time that Sir GEORGE SIMPSON, as Governor of the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company, passed through the territory into the Columbia valley. The first large emigration from the Red River to settle upon that coast occurred in 1841.

Dr. WHITMAN, in 1842, presented that matter to his brethren in the mission, and said: "We must have an American emigration or lose Oregon. It will be impossible otherwise to save it. Plans are already in operation to secure this territory in the interest of a foreign power, although it belongs to us Americans." He was willing to go himself and bring the emigration. The members of the mission said: "No, we must attend to our special work, and let the government take care of its own matters; we cannot attend to its affairs."

Early in the autumn of 1842, in October, probably, the Doctor was dining at the fort, attending there, I suppose, on some professional call, when there came a herald, saying, "The brigade is coming." That was the northern trading brigade that passed annually from Fort Vancouver to the Red River and back. "The brigade is coming and the emigrants are over the mountains." On that announcement there was a great deal of enthusiasm, and one gentleman is reported to have said: "Now the Americans may whistle, for the country is ours." Dr. WHITMAN was much struck with the remark, and excusing himself at the fort, he rode home, and he said, "I will go over the mountains, and next year I will bring an emigration of our own people across the mountains." We had at that time a few pioneers from the Western States in the valley; but they did not equal the number of the employés, laborers and servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, and, therefore, had no political power. Hence the importance of immigration.

The Doctor gave his wife in charge of a Methodist missionary at the Dalles, Rev. Mr. PERKINS, took his flour and pemican, and an extra horse or two, put on his buffalo robe, and started across the mountains in November. Frost-bitten and weary, having escaped many a danger, he reached Missouri in the last days of February or the first of March, 1843.

He found gentlemen there who had been inquiring about the Pacific coast. He said, "Do you wish to go there?" "Yes, but we are told we cannot reach that coast with our wagons." "I am from the Columbia," he said, "and will take as many of you there as will be ready in March. Be ready, and I will take you to the Columbia River, with your wagons and your families." He came on to Washington and saw Mr. WEBSTER, then Secretary of State, and told him his objects and his mission. Mr. WEBSTER says: "I have learned that wagons cannot reach the Columbia River. Moreover, Sir GEORGE SIMPSON is here, and the letters of his correspondents declare that fact. And not only so, but I am about trading Oregon for the English fisheries of Newfoundland." Mr. WHITMAN says: "I hope you will not do it. Our wagons can reach the Columbia, and I regard it as worth a great deal more than Newfoundland." Yet Mr. WEBSTER felt sure that they could not reach the Columbia.

Dr. WHITMAN then went to President TYLER and told him the same story. President TYLER said about the same things; but said: "Since you are a missionary, and as you have come on this mission, I will believe you; and if you will take wagons over to

the Columbia River, the bargain shall not be made." (These facts I have from a surviving missionary. Dr. WHITMAN himself, and all his family, were killed in 1847. I have heard the facts stated again and again.) Dr. WHITMAN says, "I will do it." He came to Boston to see the officers of the Board, and to see his friends in New-York, and returned in March to Missouri.

He took the emigrants along, and led them across the plains and mountains to Fort Hall, a little beyond the present terminus of the Union Pacific Rail-Road. Here they encamped, and were met by Capt. GRANT, who had charge under the Hudson's Bay Company, and who said to them: "Where are you going?" "We are going to the Columbia River." "Don't you know that you cannot reach it with your wagons? A great many have come here before to go there, but they have sold their wagons to me, and have gone down with their horses to the Columbia River. I will do the same by you." They were in tears, many of them. They were like persons wrecked in mid-ocean. They had travelled many months. If they were to go forward, they could not tell whether they should reach the settlements, and it was too late to go back at that time of the year. Dr. WHITMAN, who happened to be away at the time, found them in that state. He said to them: "My countrymen, I have led you thus far safely. If you will trust me, I will lead you to the Columbia River with your wagons and families."

On consultation, they trusted him. The Doctor went forward and put stakes down at needed points as guides for them to follow, and they found the best way they could. Sometimes they let their wagons down over precipices; but finally they got down to the region of the Lewis River, commonly called the Snake River. There they were met by a company of Indians from Mr. SPAULDING's station, who requested his, Dr. WHITMAN's, medical attendance at the Northwest; and he said that the Indians would take them along. He went and attended as a medical adviser at Mr. SPAULDING's, and the Indians took the company down, as Ex-Governor BURNETT, of California, who was one of the company, said, by a better route than the Doctor had found, because he did not know the best routes. They stopped at the Doctor's station, 24 miles from the Columbia River, and there they were refreshed. Doctor WHITMAN, on leaving home the previous autumn, ordered his employes to provide food for them; for he knew that many of them would be without food, and would need rest and refreshment.

There they refreshed themselves, and changed their worn-out

teams, as far as they could, for better cattle. Some of them went down the river, and others over the Cascade Mountains to the Willamette Valley. It should be said that Dr. McLAUGHLIN, while chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and on his own account afterwards, treated the immigrants kindly, furnishing them supplies on credit, if they needed it. Of course, on their arrival, the American power became the strongest in actual possession; and as Americans do, they at once proposed to have a provisional government. The United States had not yet extended its power over them. They appointed a day of election, and chose for their governor a gentleman who had been sent out as secular agent of the Methodist Mission to the Indians, formerly a merchant of your own city, GEORGE ABERNETHY, Esq. He was chosen twice during the time they had a provisional government. Mr. ABERNETHY, I may here be allowed to remark, served with little if any pay, and, as I understand, he has never yet been paid by the general government.

But although the American citizens thus obtained the supremacy, there were agencies at work against them. The Indians seemed to be finally let loose, like dogs from the leash, and Dr. WHITMAN and his wife, and about twenty more American citizens, were murdered by them. Yet not one of the employes or members of the Hudson's Bay Company were murdered, and no one of those people who sympathized with them. But it should be said that P. S. OGDEN, Esq., Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, humanely and with great promptness rescued the captive women and children. That massacre was on November 7, 1847. Then ensued an Indian war, conducted by Gov. ABERNETHY; but the result finally was, that the United States government gained and held possession of that territory.

Gentlemen are aware that various efforts had been made for many years to secure California. President JACKSON attempted this in 1835. Mr. SLIDELL, in later times, made a similar effort; but these efforts were rather sporadic and sectional than national. At this time there seemed to be a national feeling in favor of taking possession of the northwestern coast, and in 1845 Mr. FREMONT was sent over to make explorations, which he did in a scientific manner. The Mexican war came on, and Mr. FREMONT and Commodore SLOAT or STOCKTON, and some other United States officers, were co-operating in securing California. As yet the discovery of the gold had not been very manifest, although it had long been understood, as before said, that it was a gold-bearing region.

After the settlement of the Mexican war, and after we had gained actual military possession of California, having purchased it, although we had conquered it; having got it in actual possession by treaty also, and put our flag over it, then it was, as it would seem, *that God uncovered the gold*, in 1848. You know the effect every where. I was on that coast at the time, and it had the same effect upon us. It is a most wonderful fact, that the gold was uncovered in the very sands and brooks near where the trappers and hunters had carried on their traffic; and emigrants had even taken some of those pebbles, and pounded them on their wagon wheels, and found them malleable, and did not know what they were. There have been two or three efforts to find the spot where they found those pebbles, but thus far in vain, although they have found similar places all around that region. The providential fact we see now is, that God saved that coast for us, and hence it was hidden from the eyes of men generally, until we had got actual possession not only of Oregon but of California. He then uncovered it, and seemed to say: "*It is for you Americans.*" It was given to us by the providence of God. It was one of the pivotal points in our history, but we did not even then know why it was.

Society was upset. Business was changed. Men went there with fortunes and lost them; and men went there without fortunes, and gained them on that coast. You could not by any possible argument control them. They went from the east and from the west, from all the States of this Union, from every country in Europe, from every portion of the Pacific coast down to Chili, from every island of the sea, from China and the East Indies. It drew men there with a most powerful force, like a mighty magnet drawing everything to itself. It changed the entire features of commerce. We did not understand it. The miners dug faithfully in the deep ravines, and our statistics show that the gold came in at the rate of about fifty millions per annum on the average.

At last the storm cloud of civil war burst upon us. We had to have armaments, and fleets, and munitions of war, and provisions, and all those means with which to carry on war successfully. We had to stretch our credit, and we must have some backing for it. We must have some power that would assure it. And now we have learned to see that God gave us those millions of gold, and brought them safely to this metropolis of the nation, so that the credit of the nation might be sustained. We had to buy munitions of war; and the miners upon that coast were God's servants in sending to us

the gold which paid for them, and which assured our national credit.

And he has given us that coast, not only for the past, not only for the preservation of the nation in its great struggle, not only to sustain its past credit, but to ensure its future credit. We have there given to us stores enough to pay for all the bonds that we have ever issued; enough to make it certain that we can be an honest nation, and pay everything we have promised to pay up to the letter of the law. (Applause.)

Now I turn from the history of Oregon, and the means by which we obtained possession of that whole coast, where we now have three States. I need not dwell longer upon these points. But I wish to say, that we have got to a certain extent a political possession; I do not mean in the interest of any political party, but that which constitutes a political power in the interests of man. God has thrown upon that coast a body of men, heterogeneous, coming from all parts of the world. You have that character in New-York to a large extent. We have it on a larger scale, spread over a larger territory, on the western coast. The great mass of the people there came together without affiliation. But the quadrennial and biennial conflicts of our political system are the very fusing process by which these incongruous elements are fused together, and by which they become moulded into the American character. So that from whatever quarter of the world they come, by these periodical conflicts their minds are moulded together, and they learn to feel the personal privilege and individual responsibility of citizenship. That is a very important element, that they will become Americanized as they become members of our nation. This is the continual gain from these conflicts. Whoever is elected, we are glad of the political conflict, because it has a great educating power, and it tends to make us homogeneous out of these heterogeneous materials; and the fiercer the political furnace glows, the more perfect will be the social fusion and remoulding.

This is an important element in the future growth and security of that people. Let me say that there is no other than an American opinion upon that coast—I have been there twenty years—there has never been an idea of separation from this country. There has never been an idea or a thought of it. There is no more possibility of separating the Pacific States from the Union than of separating New-York from the Union, and there never has been. The heart-beat there is precisely the same as the heart-beat here. As the flag

went up or down, and as the thrill of joy or of agony swept over you, so we felt it. When the Monitor saved your shipping, our hearts felt as yours felt, that it was our victory and our joy, as it was yours. When Gen. GRANT and our corps of noble officers "fought it out on this line," our hearts and hopes were with them.

We have gained a possession in other respects there. Education and religion are going on, not *pari passu* with business. I wish they were going on with equal pace with business and commerce, for we have gained power largely in commerce. American ships sweep the Pacific to a very wide extent. Foremost for many years to promote our national interest, as well as their own, and to give prestige to our merchant marine on those seas, have been the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's lines. Lately, the California, Mexican and Oregon lines have done much in this service. These and all such carriers help greatly to develop that whole coast.

Let me now speak to you of the natural resources of the Northwest Coast. Let me remind you, in the first place, that we have upon the slope of the Pacific a territory of over 1,400,000 square miles, nearly twice as large as all Europe, Russia excepted. Gen. HALLECK reports that he has 12,750 statute miles of sea-coast, including the islands under his care, and including Alaska. "The States and territories along the coast alone," says Mr. CROXSON, in his book on the Natural Wealth of California, "including Alaska, comprise an area of 894,229 square miles, which is larger than all the New-England, Middle and Western States, or nearly equal to France, Great Britain, Germany, Prussia and Austria combined. These nations contain nearly one hundred and sixty millions of inhabitants, and the whole Pacific slope and territories have less than a million, while there is no country richer in natural wealth than a large portion of the Pacific coast."

In respect to resources, we all understand that climate has much to do with a country, its inhabitants and resources. You have heard many isolated facts regarding temperature. Gen. STEVENS, for instance, in the Northwestern Railway survey, said that the temperature grew higher as you went west. He said, also, that the Indians kept their horses above 49° N. latitude through the entire year; and he also said there was less snow on the mountains north of 45° than south of 42°. You have heard such statements made repeatedly. Let me call your attention, not so much to the isolated facts, as to the law, which governs all those facts.

On looking at the map, you will see that the Pacific Ocean is about

10,000 miles wide within the tropics. There are 47 degrees of latitude, over which the blazing sun is always drawing up the air as it draws up the water, so that there is a sea above us as well as below us, not always visible, but really there. That air is put in motion by the revolution of the earth, and by the natural tendency of a heated atmosphere and evaporated water. Now, as the trade winds make their way upon the surface of the earth towards the torrid zone and towards the equator, so the currents above make their way towards the poles. Take that great cauldron, 10,000 miles wide, and covering 47 degrees of latitude, with the sun acting upon it continually, and you find a constant current moving in, and a constant current moving out. This latter current, being more rapid in its starting than the revolution of the part of the earth near the poles, will strike our continent as a southwest wind, just as the current from the Atlantic strikes the European continent as a southwest wind. It is precisely the same law, but upon a grander scale. In the upper regions of the air the currents are always from the southwest, and at a certain latitude they will strike the earth.

We have a current of water acting under the same law; for, as the Gulf Stream goes into the Gulf of Mexico, and passes northward, a portion of it going into the Northern Arctic, and another portion going down the coast of England and France, and thus back again, so you have the same thing on the Pacific side, the current striking China and Japan, passing northward, and one portion of it passing through Behring's Straits and giving you warmer water there, and another portion striking under the Aleutian Islands, and returning upon our own coast, carrying the waters back to the equator. This warm sea-current moderates our Pacific shore, as the Gulf Stream moderates the western shore of Europe. Now, also, this current of warm air, flowing northward, must somewhere deposit the water it has taken up. But we have there great ranges of mountains. First, we have the mountains upon the coast, passing up along the peninsula of Lower California, some of them 2,000 or 3,000 feet high; sometimes bluffing right upon the coast, and the line extending up to the rocks and precipices of Alaska. That is the first line, and it catches the lowest stratum of the air, which deposits its water in the form of rain and snow.

Inside of that, a hundred miles more or less from the shore, you have the higher range, known in Mexico as the Cordilleras, in California as the Sierra Nevada, and in Oregon as the Cascade mountains, all the same range, running up the coast, but a hundred miles

distant from it, from Mexico to Alaska. These are about 7,000 feet high in California; in Oregon, about 4,500 feet; and as you go north, they are still lower. Out of them spring mountains 12,000 to 15,000 feet high, and always covered with snow. This second breastwork of mountains of course catches the next stratum of this vapor, and the water is deposited as rain or as snow. I found on careful measurement that the rain fall at Oregon City, for the years 1849, 1850 and 1851, averaged from 37 to 60 inches per annum. Hence you have, upon the mountains over which the Pacific Central Rail-Road passes, large deposits of rain and snow. As that region is so high it catches large quantities. They must have sheds for forty miles, as reported, upon that rail-road, to protect it in winter. This is one of the experiments which they are now trying. As you go further north the mountains are 5,000, 4,000 and 3,000 feet high, catching less moisture as you pass towards the northeast.

About 600 or 800 miles from the ocean you have the chain of the Rocky Mountains, rising to a height of about 7,000 or 8,000 feet, with many depressions, which are much lower. These mountains will catch the moisture which has gone over the Nevadas, and deposit it in the form of rain or snow. In the winter this vapor of course will strike the earth at a lower latitude than in the summer; for as the earth turns northward, so to speak, in the winter, it must strike further south. The first range takes a large part of the moisture; the second range takes more, and the two leave comparatively little for the Rocky Mountains; while the lower regions of country, east of the Nevadas, will be a rainless desert, like the peninsula of California.

Here we have the basis of the great resources of the Northwest. The moisture and the warm air from the south give us a mild temperature, so that I have had in my garden grass in midwinter; and we had, winter before last, an inch only of ice, and last winter only six or eight inches, and I am at $45^{\circ} 35'$. Last winter we had from four to six inches of snow, and some winters we have scarcely any. You find that the isothermal line of your own city passes so far north on the western coast as to reach above 49° up towards Alaska. You find on our coast a climate like the European climate, only that it seems to be upon a scale made peculiar by the conformation of the mountains. The climate on the coast is very salubrious in summer, mild and humid in winter, and also healthy. That of the interior is warm in summer, dry and bracing in winter, and always healthy. The best lumber and the grandest forests upon the

American continent are upon the Pacific coast. This moisture gives us the great trees, rising 100 to 300 feet high, and six, ten or twelve feet in diameter; and these forests extend at intervals from California up to Alaska. We have vast resources in California, in the valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, and the Willamette in Oregon, and in the Territory of Washington, or the Puget's Sound country. Vancouver's Island also, and the archipelago above, where the air is affected in the same way, produces the same results.

East of the Nevadas you have the rainless region; and why? because the mountains have stopped the clouds. Hence you find very little timber there for a stretch of 500 or 600 miles. Hence, upon the rail-road, they find it very difficult to get tie timber. But you find a grass region, and as you go north you find more timber, because the mountains are lower and the clouds can go over them. Hence it is that Oregon gives you finer timber than California or Nevada, and in Washington it is still better. What gives you fine timber gives grass; and, therefore, you find them raising cattle there and sending them in all directions. East of the Cascades are the same high grass-covered prairies, and it is a vast cattle raising region. Hence it is, under a climatic law, which Mr. STEVENS did not state, but which I have attempted to explain, that the Indians can keep their horses during the whole winter as well as the summer up as high as 49° . Intelligent drovers have told me, that they have wintered their cattle above 49° , between the Cascade range and the Rocky Mountains, repeatedly, winter after winter, saying that there is the very weather to give us grass in summer and dried grass in winter—not covered usually with snow.

What gives us grass gives us the cereals; and hence you find that the best wheat of the continent has come from that coast. It is the very climate which gives us grass that also gives us the cereals, and, therefore, California begins to send forth cereals almost equal to its product of gold, even in fabulous amounts; and Oregon is doing the same. This year, that small population in Oregon have raised, as it is estimated, five millions of bushels of wheat; and the production of lumber is no less. In 1866, the few mills in the neighborhood of Puget's Sound, as Mr. RRRZ testifies, sent out four hundred millions of feet, including spars, piles, masts and sawed lumber, and I do not suppose that in any year the export will fall below that. The same great climatic law gives you lumber, cereals, grass and fruits, and in that region these productions are very abundant. The fruits of the Pacific and interior of the Northwest coasts are unsurpassed in quantity and quality.

Now, a word with regard to the snows of the North. Gentlemen have raised the question, whether there is not very much more snow in the Oregon than in the California mountains? The very nature of that immense southern boundary of mountains, 7,000 feet high, will cause a deposit of moisture from the air flowing northeastward from the Pacific, in the form of rain or of snow, and therefore it is that they have snow to a great depth, so that the emigrants have sometimes travelled in winter among the branches of the trees in the deep ravines, and have been astonished at the amount of snow. These mountains have caused the deposit of so much of the moisture of the air passing over them, that after it has passed over them there is less moisture, and therefore less snow to fall, as Governor STEVENS correctly stated. The result will be, that the Northern Rail-Road will not be impeded by snow to an extent any thing like that of the Central Pacific Road. As the northern barriers of the Coast and Cascade ranges are lower, the deposits of vapor are distributed over a wider area, and thus are more equalized.

One more point, to which I wish to call your attention, and that is, the development of that country in relation to commerce. This has gone on with wonderful rapidity. The rail-roads themselves, that have been projected towards our coast, especially the Union and Central Pacific, on which the builders display so much wisdom and energy, for which grants of land have been proposed, seem to me not at all to conflict with each other. All of them are necessary to develop such an immense region of country. The Union and Central Pacific will develop regions which the Northern or Southern Pacific cannot affect. In like manner they will each open to settlement and business sections independent of each other. Whatever remarks, therefore, I have made, are not to be taken as invidious toward any particular line of railroad. Every one is important. We have no need to assume that there are conflicting interests between them; for all will have a local business by developing the country along its own route, and all will thus do well. But it is proper to speak particularly of *the two grand lines, which now rush towards each other, and approach completion, the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Rail-Roads. These two pioneers, which span the continent and unite the oceans, promising to put the commerce of Asia, America and Europe upon a new course, and to develop it into grander proportions, deserve a nation's praise as well as a nation's aid.* Already every section of our country feels the stimulus of this grand and united Atlantic

and Pacific Rail-Road, while the people along the route, and especially at the *termini* of branch roads, and at the extreme western *termini*, are moved to the noblest enterprises of business. This united road and its branches will largely increase the number and size of settlements in our vast interior, and in all the Northwest. The result must be a larger product of gold and silver from the mountains, and of vastly greater amounts of agricultural products. They will give us speedily new and populous and wealthy States.

The Northern route gives us one great advantage in respect to foreign communication, viz., the saving of 800 or 900 miles in the distance to China; and for this reason. It is conceded that the saving in the land distance from New-York, or the Atlantic coast, to the Pacific, is about 300 miles; but from Puget's Sound to China, the distance saved by sea is probably 600 miles. Prof. WHITNEY, of Harvard College, called my attention to this statement, which can be verified. Lay down upon a globe a great circle from the line of Panama to China or Japan, and it passes through California, Oregon, and a part of Washington, and thence along by the Aleutian Islands on that coast. It will be seen that from California the shortest line is along the coast by the Puget's Sound country; and therefore the Northern road, at once striking the Pacific at that point, is nearer.

The fact, as I have stated, that the great current from the Pacific passes north through the Aleutian Islands, gives warmth there, and gives value to that whole region. And this is one great interest in favor of that route and of our Alaska purchase.

Alaska has also some of the advantages that I have recited above, for we have there fisheries, timber, coal, fur, copper, and probably gold, while the whaling interest will be greatly subserved by its more ready communication with Alaska. The ocean current of which I have spoken, giving warmth to our own coast, adds warmth to that whole Peninsula. There is the great river Yucon, the largest, perhaps, on that coast, except the Columbia, and such a river must drain a large and somewhat open country. Besides, the supplies of peltries gathered from that region for many years, indicate the value of the country. The cod, salmon and halibut fisheries of that north coast promise to be a constant source of wealth.

In these and many other respects, the country is worth, in my estimation, more than we gave for it; and, considering them all, it is worth five times what we gave for it. I have detained you too long. Yet I have only been able to in-

dicate some of the views with respect to our Western and North-western coast, which I consider worthy of your consideration.

I thank you for the kind invitation which you have given me, and for your courtesy in listening so long to my remarks. I have called your attention to a large section of our vast national domain, too briefly and too cursorily to do it justice. For there are the germs of a new empire, and the homes of future millions.

"Westward the star of Empire takes its way."

On conclusion of the Address, the following resolution was offered by Mr. FREDERICK A. CONKLING, and unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of the Chamber be presented to Dr. ATKINSON for the full and instructive address delivered before them to-day, and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same to the Chamber for publication.

NOTE.—At the close of the address, A. A. Low, Esq., inquired whether the government had recognised the great deeds of Dr. WHITMAN by any suitable memorial? The answer was, No. Dr. WHITMAN and wife sleep in a little mound at Wailatpu, near the spot on which they were massacred, with no suitable monument as yet to mark their graves.

But a surviving fellow missionary, Rev. C. EELLS, of Walla Walla, W. T., with a few other gentlemen, have established Whitman Seminary near by, and they are striving to make it a living and a fruitful monument of the spirit and purposes of this noble missionary in the mental and moral culture of the children and youth of that region of rich valleys, plains and mountains.

I am authorized to say, that Rev. Mr. EELLS and the other trustees will gratefully receive and faithfully appropriate any funds which either individuals, societies, or the government may wish to give "Whitman Seminary," to promote its growth and usefulness. It ought to become Whitman College, and thus be the nursery of noble principles and noble characters, the mental and moral light-house for all that region in all future generations.

Hon. WM. E. DODGE, 19 Cliff Street, or Rev. THERON BALDWIN, D. D., Secretary of the College Society, 42 Bible House, is willing to receive and transmit any donations to that Seminary.

G. H. ATKINSON.





